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## Licensed Occupations

### License Information:

#### Physical Therapists Assistants

##### License Description:

Physical therapy assistants help patients regain physical function after illness or injury.

Physical therapy assistants must be supervised by a physical therapist. They help provide services that improve patients' mobility and reduce their pain. The goal is to limit or prevent permanent disabilities in patients who have been ill or injured. Their patients include people with low back pain, arthritis, heart disease, or broken bones. They also treat accident victims.

Physical therapy assistants have a variety of tasks. Before working with patients, they confer with a physical therapist about the treatment plan for that patient. Under the direction of therapists, assistants provide many different types of treatment. They teach patients how to do exercises to strengthen muscles or improve mobility. They train patients how to use and care for braces or prostheses (artificial body parts). They teach patients to use support devices such as crutches. Assistants also administer traction, which pulls joints to relieve neck and back pain. They provide soothing treatments, such as massage or heat or cold packs. They also use electrical stimulation and ultrasound. Most of these treatments work to relieve pain and to improve the function of joints and muscles.

Physical therapy assistants record treatment details in patients' charts. They also observe and record the effects of treatment. To do this, they may measure a patient's range of motion in joints or body parts. They may also take a patient's vital signs. Assistants then report patients' responses to physical therapists.

Physical therapy aides also work under the direction of therapists. However, the tasks they perform are less complex than those done by assistants. Aides help make therapy sessions productive by keeping the treatment areas clean and organized. They also assist patients in moving to and from treatment areas. For example, they may push them in a wheelchair or give them a shoulder to lean on. Aides sometimes assist patients in dressing or undressing.

Physical therapy aides often have clerical tasks. They may answer the phone, order supplies, or fill out forms for insurance companies. The extent to which an aide or assistant performs clerical tasks depends on the size and type of the facility.

#### LICENSE INFORMATION

##### Montana Certification

##### "Physical Therapist Assistant"

Licensure is authorized by Montana Code Annotated 37-11-301 through 37-11-322.

##### Requirements

Physical therapist assistants:

1. Minimum age of 18 years.
2. Graduation from a board-approved physical therapist assistant curriculum.
3. Satisfactory completion of a national and state jurisprudence exam.
4. Three statements of good moral character

##### Renewal

Licenses expire on April 1 of each year, and may be renewed upon payment of a fee.

#### Fees

Original license \$25  
Annual renewal \$25  
Penalty fee \$50

There is a separate fee for the exam.

#### OCCUPATIONAL INFORMATION

##### Current Employment

In Montana, there are 99 physical therapist assistants licensed in this small occupation

##### Wages

In Montana, the median wage for physical therapy assistants is \$2,470 per month (\$14.25 per hour). Half earn between \$1,908 and \$2,832 per month (\$11.01 and \$18.34 per hour).

Nationally, the median wage for physical therapist assistants is \$3,110 per month (\$17.93 per hour). Half of all physical therapist assistants earn between \$2,570 and \$3,630 per month (\$14.81 and \$20.94 per hour).

Wages vary by employer and area of the country. Wages also vary based on the worker's education and experience.

Benefits vary by employer. Most full-time physical therapist assistants receive benefits. These include paid vacation, sick leave, and health insurance. Many part-time assistants do not receive benefits.

##### Outlook

In Montana, employment for physical therapy assistants and physical therapy aides is projected to grow much faster than the statewide average for all occupations through 2012.

Nationally, the number of jobs for physical therapy assistants and aides is expected to grow much faster than average through the year 2012.

However, growth may be slower in the short run due to changes in federal laws. New laws now limit insurance payments for physical therapy services. Over the long run, demand will continue to rise with the increase in the elderly population. This population is vulnerable to chronic conditions that require therapy. These patients often need extra assistance in their treatment, making the role of assistants and aides very important. In addition, licensed physical therapy assistants can reduce the cost of services. This is because they can provide many aspects of the treatment prescribed by the physical therapist.

#### Licensing Agency:

Montana Board of Physical Therapy Examiners  
301 South Park, 4th Floor  
PO Box 200513  
Helena, MT 59620-0513  
(406) 841-2387  
[dlibsdptp@mt.gov](mailto:dlibsdptp@mt.gov)

#### License History

2005 Number of Licenses Issued (Annual): 99  
2004 Number of Licenses Issued (Annual): 102  
2003 Number of Licenses Issued (Annual): 90  
2001 Number of Licenses Issued (Annual): 91

14 of 24 Licenses



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